



The abduction of Europe

Europe, daughter of the king of Tyre Agenor and Telefassa, was the only girl among four brothers, Phoenix, Cadmus, Cilix and Thassos. One bright, sunny day, the princess went out with her friends to pick flowers. She was playing, singing and dancing, having a wreath of flowers on her head, when Jupiter (Zeus), the father of gods and men, saw her from above and decided to conquer her because of her beauty. With his magic powers he turned into a golden-white bull. Quietly he went up to the beautiful girl bellowing melodiously. He knelt at her feet. He was like no other bull in size and figure. Even his horns were small and elegant. Between them there was something shining like a star. Europe was fooled by the bull's beauty and gentleness and sat on his back. Now the bull-shaped Jupiter had what he desired and stepped away gently. When Jupiter saw the open sea before him, started crossing the open sea with Europe hanging on to him. With the help of his brother Poseidon and of Amphitrite, his brother's wife, they arrived in Crete. Europe began to understand that she would never again see the beautiful beaches of Tyre. Agenor and Telefassa learned about their daughter's abduction. In despair, they sent their sons either to find their sister or never to return to their fatherland. After his father's death, Phoenix went back to Tyre and renamed it Phoenicia. Cilix founded Cilicia in Asia Minor while Thassos set up a colony on the island of Thassos. Cadmus left Tyre with his mother to search for Europe. He wandered for years from city to city bringing the alphabet to the Greek mainland. When they reached Thrace, Telefassa died of despair for her lost. Then Cadmus, receiving an oracle daughter from Delphi, founded Thebes. When Jupiter and Europe arrived in Crete, the bull went up into the sky as a cloud and became the star sign of Taurus. Jupiter took back his divine form and declared his love to Europe. From their union were born three mythical kings: brave Sarpedon, fair Radamanthys and the legendary Minos, who ruled Crete with wisdom and justice. Later Jupiter married Europe to the king of Crete, Asterion. However, the most precious gift of all was a whole continent, present-day Europe, whose name means «The one with a wide vision».

the end



Places connected to the legend “The abduction of Europe”



*Tyre was a major port in
Phoenician times. Europe lived
there.
The white bull went with Europe
to Crete .*



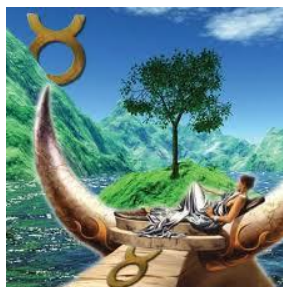
*The bull left Europe in
Gortyna of Crete where she
got married to the king
Asterion.*



*Zeus coupled with Europe
under this plane tree in
Gortyna.*



*The king Minos was one of their
three sons who created the Minoan
civilization.*



The sign of Taurus.